

Message Text

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PAGE 01 SAO PA 00873 251630Z

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SAO PAULO 0873

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: OVIP (CARTER, JIMMY), BR, US

SUBJ: PRESIDENTIAL VISIT -- MEETING WITH LEADING BRAZILIANS

REF: STATE 077605 AND PREVIOUS

1. SUMMARY: "ISTO E" MARCH 25 PUBLISHED ARTICLE APPROXIMATELY ONE PAGE IN LENGTH BY CLOVIS ROSSI ON SCHEDULE MEETING BETWEEN PRESIDENT AND LEADING BRAZILIANS (OMITS VIANNA AND LISTS BARDELLA INSTEAD OF MINDLIN). ARTICLE GIVES BRIEF SUMMARIES OF CARDINAL'S LETTER OF OCTOBER 29, 1977 AND PRESIDENT'S REPLY BUT ONLY DIRECT QUOTE IS THAT PRESIDENT ACKNOWLEDGE LETTER WITH THANKS FOR "BRINGING TO MY ATTENTION" (TRAZENDO A MINHA ATENCAO) THE QUESTION OF DISAPPEARED PERSONS. REST OF LETTER IS SUMMARIZED IN TWO BRIEF SENTENCES WHICH INCLUDES PRESIDENT'S INTEREST IN MEETING WITH CARDINAL ARNS. (COMMENT: AS FAR AS TEXT OF PRESIDENT'S LETTER IS CONCERNED, ISTO E IS MUCH MORE CIRCUMSPECT THAN WAS FOLHA DE SAO PAULO, AS PREVIOUSLY REPORTED FROM HERE.) END SUMMARY

2. "ISTO E" ARTICLE HEADLINED: "WHAT WILL JIMMY HEAR FROM THE CARDINAL? A PROBABLE TOPIC: THE LIST OF 23 DISAPPEARED PERSONS." ARTICLE APPEARS IN 10 PAGE SPECIAL SECTION ON BRAZIL/US RELATIONS WITH OVERALL BANNER HEADING: "FRIENDS, WITH CAUTION" OVER PHOTO-
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PAGE 02 SAO PA 00873 251630Z

GRAPHS OF THE TWO PRESIDENTS IN THE CENTER OF A TWO PAGE SPREAD. ROSSI ARTICLE APPEARS ON 4TH PAGE WITH A BOX ACROSS THE 3RD AND 4TH PAGES HEADED: "IMPRISONED? DEAD? A MYSTERY." IN SMALLER PRINT IT CONTINUES: "THEY WERE DETAINED BETWEEN 1971 AND 1975. NOTHING FURTHER WAS KNOWN OF THEM." TEXT OF BOX BEGINS: "THE FOLLOWING IS THE LIST OF 23 DISAPPEARED PERONS WHICH IS IN THE HANDS OF THE WHITE HOUSE:" THE LIST CONTAINS ABOUT EQUAL NUMBER OF

PERSONS ARRESTED IN RIO AND SAO PAULO, WITH SOME IN PERNAMBUCO, OTHERS ON ROUTE TO SAO PAULO. 11 WERE ARRESTED AFTER PRESIDENT GEISEL TOOK OFFICE IN 1974 AND ONE IN 1975. THE ROSSI ARTICLE STATES THAT AFTER PRESIDENT CARTER AND THE CARDINAL MET AT NOTRE DAME LAST YEAR, THE COMMISSION ON PEACE AND JUSTICE OF THE ARCH-DIOCESE OF SAO PAULO BEGAN TO COMPILE A LIST OF POLITICAL PRISONERS WHO HAD DISAPPEARED. THIS LIST ORIGINALLY REACHED ALMOST 60 NAMES, BUT THE LIST FINALLY GIVEN TO THE CARDINAL INCLUDED ONLY THE 23 NAMES OF THESE PERSONS "ABOUT WHOM THERE WAS ABSOLUTE CERTAINTY THAT THEY HAD BEEN ARRESTED BY SECURITY ORGANS AND SUBSEQUENTLY DISAPPEARED (READ THE BOX BELOW)". IN TRANSMITTING THE LIST TO THE PRESIDENT, ROSSI STATES, THE CARDINAL AVOIDED ANY POLITICAL REFERENCES, MERELY LIMITING HIMSELF TO TALK ABOUT THE PAIN FELT BY THE FAMILIES OF THE VICTIMS AND BY EXTENSION OF HIS PAIN AS PASTOR.

3. IN A SECTION HEADED, THE MISCELLANY, ROSSI IDENTIFIED FOUR OF THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE MARCH 31 MEETING AND STRESSES THAT THEY WERE INVITED AS PRESIDENT FAORO OF THE BAR ASSOCIATION WAS WAS CAREFUL TO POINT OUT IN THE PRESS. THE HETEROGENEOUS NATURE OF THE PERSONALITIES AND THE BRIEF TIME ALLOTTED FOR THE MEETING (1 HOUR) INDICATES THAT THERE WILL BE NO PROFOUND DISCUSSION OF ANY TOPIC, ROSSI CONTINUES. THE PRESENCE OF FAORO AND THE TWO CARDINALS MAKES IT LIKELY THAT THE HUMAN RIGHTS ISSUE WILL NOT FAIL TO BE TOUCHED UPON, ROSSI ADDS. IN THE FOLLOWING SECTION, HEADED "THE CAUTION", ROSSI CONTINUES: "IN ANY CASE, THE AMERICAN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 SAO PA 00873 251630Z

GOVERNMENT IS ACTING QUITE CAUTIOUSLY IN TREATING THIS QUESTION (HUMAN RIGHTS) AFTER WHAT IT CONSIDERED AN 'EXAGGERATED REACTION' BY BRAZILIAN AUTHORITIES ON PREVIOUS OCCASIONS (OVERREACTION, ROSSI USES THE ENGLISH WORD, WAS A DESIGNATION WHICH I HEARD WITH REASONABLE FREQUENCY, WHETHER IT WAS IN THE AMERICAN EMBASSY IN BRASILIA OR IN THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE IN WASHINGTON)."

4. COMMENT: OTHER THAN THE LIST OF NAMES ITSELF, I FIND NOTHING WHICH HAS NOT ALREADY BEEN PREVIOUSLY PUBLISHED IN THE FOLHA DE SAO PAULO, WHICH CLEARLY IDENTIFIED THE TYPES OF CASES IN THE LIST SENT TO THE PRESIDENT BY THE CARDINAL.
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